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How-To: Dismantle Door Lock and Remove Key Fragments (w/pics)

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10-25-2008, 05:20 PM

#1

[d_rock](#)

Member



Join Date: Jun 2007
 Posts: 261

2005 ION-3 Quad Coupe

How-To: Dismantle Door Lock and Remove Key Fragments (w/pics)

My first How-To!

This is to show you how to dismantle a door lock and remove broken key fragments. This is assuming conventional means such as graphite and lubricants could not remove the broken key.

This guide should apply to most door locks, but this particular How-To uses pics from my 95 SW2 hatch lock, which was clogged with road salt and stuck in the "unlocked" state.

Tools needed:
 Precision screwdriver set (optional, but helps)
 Needle-nose pliers
 Bench vice
 Ultrasonic cleaner (if lock is clogged with road salt)

Step 1:
 Remove lock assembly from car door/hatch (not covered in this How-To)

Step 2:
 Dismantle rear of lock assembly. In this example, the spring must be detached from the lock housing.



Step 3:
 Remove wedge clip, allowing you to remove rear bracket and spring



Step 4:
Remove all rear components (bracket, spring, clip)



Step 5:
Remove the front faceplate. This is going to be tricky, you want to keep the plate as intact as possible, being careful not to damage it. You will want to re-attach this later and it will be more difficult if you bend it out of shape. I used needle-nose pliers and precision flatheads to gently loosen it. Be CAREFUL when removing it as the inner plate may fly out due to the springs compressed against it. Do it slowly and over a flat surface.



Step 6:
After removing the faceplate and inner plate (don't lose the tiny springs!), you are in a position to remove the inner lock assembly from the housing and assess your situation.



Step 7:
Here is where things will get interesting. I will show you how I solved my problem, but yours may differ depending on your key fragment and the condition of your lock assembly. The key (hehe) issue is getting those tumblers (the gold plates that are engaged by the key) to be freely moving so that you may position them in a way that will allow you to remove the fragment. In my case, road salt had solidified all over the interior of the lock! My tumblers were frozen in place and so was the key fragment. My solution...? An ultrasonic cleaner! This literally shook the salt from the metal and allowed me to do some fiddling with the tumblers.



Step 8:

At this point, your tumblers need to be freely moving or close to it. This is where precision screwdrivers help as they will allow you to get into the crevices of the assembly and move the tumblers into their unlocked position.



Step 9:

Using a bench vice, you can use two screwdrivers to engage both sides of the housing, experimenting with the tumblers and trying to fish out the key fragment. This is where graphite and lubricant can help greatly. With patience, you should be able to get out your key fragment and celebrate!



Step 10:

At this point, I would lay all your components out and lube them up, this will prevent future issues and will prepare you for re-assembling your lock. This picture also serves well for reference.



Step 11:

For me this was the hardest part as it requires a lot of patience and a little careful tinkering. Once the lock is reassembled, you need to re-attach the front faceplate, while keeping the inner plate and its springs in place. I used a bench vice to hold the assembly steady, while I held the faceplate on and bent all its edges carefully back to where they needed to be. It took a lot of work and some creative vice usage, but in the end I prevailed, and so can you!



I hope this guide will at least prove useful as a reference to those who are interested in the innards of your door locks, and will hopefully be a step-by-step guide for those who need to fish out stuck key fragments.

Please leave comments and suggestions...thanks for reading!

...
"Pessimists see the glass as half empty, optimists see the glass as half full. Engineers see that the glass is twice as big as it needs to be."

2005 Saturn Ion-3 Quad Coupe, Automatic

REWARD EXCELLENCE!



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10-25-2008, 06:26 PM

#2

[97sl2DOHCaut1.9](#)

Member

Join Date: Jun 2008
Posts: 305

Re: How-To: Dismantle Door Lock and Remove Key Fragments (w/pics)

good how-to ...

I have a door lock that works only sometimes ... maybe i'll try this for a few reasons:

cannot find new cylinders at the parts stores and also I want to be able to use my orig key anyway

REWARD EXCELLENCE!



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10-25-2008, 06:28 PM

#3

[d_rock](#)

Member



Join Date: Jun 2007
Posts: 261

2005 ION-3 Quad Coupe

Re: How-To: Dismantle Door Lock and Remove Key Fragments (w/pics)

Quote:

Originally Posted by [97sl2DOHCaut1.9](#)
good how-to ...

I have a door lock that works only sometimes ... maybe i'll try this for a few reasons:

cannot find new cylinders at the parts stores and also I want to be able to use my orig key anyway

That's exactly why I went through all that trouble...I wanted to use my original key! And did not want to admit defeat and buy another lock, haha

And thanks!

...
"Pessimists see the glass as half empty, optimists see the glass as half full. Engineers see that the glass is twice as big as it needs to be."

2005 Saturn Ion-3 Quad Coupe, Automatic

REWARD EXCELLENCE!



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10-25-2008, 06:33 PM

#4

1994Saturn
Senior Member



Join Date: Sep 2006
Location: New York. Upstate.
Posts: 1,749
1994 SL2
1994 SL1

 **Re: How-To: Dismantle Door Lock and Remove Key Fragments (w/pics)**

Good write up!

Charlie, do you think you can move this to the How To section?🇺🇸

...

Current:
1998 SL2 Auto issues 112K
1995 Eagle Vision 3.5L TSI 117K
Past:
98 SL1 254k miles Valves Burnt.
94 SL2 125K miles Diff Pin Blew!
94 SL1 Sold @134K.

REWARD EXCELLENCE!

 Rate the quality of this post and help 1994Saturn reputation points. Click the reputation button near the bottom left corner of this message box. Thank you!

10-25-2008, 09:16 PM

#5

Charlie
Administrator



Join Date: Feb 2000
Location: USA
Posts: 3,789
[Charlie's Photos](#) 

 **Re: How-To: Dismantle Door Lock and Remove Key Fragments (w/pics)**

Quote:

Originally Posted by **1994Saturn** 
Good write up!

Charlie, do you think you can move this to the How To section?🇺🇸

I agree! The thread has been moved!

Charlie

...

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